

**Management System:** [Communications and Public Affairs](#)

**Subject Area:** Media Relations

## **Procedure 3 – Coordinating and Approving News Releases**

**Issue Date:**  
09/13/12

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### **1.0 Applicability**

This procedure applies to staff involved in press release coordination, including, but not limited to the:

- Public Affairs at the Environmental Management Consolidated Business Center (EMCBC);
- Supporting Public Affairs Offices at the EMCBC Site Offices;
- Director, EMCBC;
- Points of Contact (POCs) for the Assistant Directors;
- U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) EM Office of Communication and External Affairs (EM-3) representatives

The procedure and the process also apply to EMCBC contractor public affairs officers.

### **2.0 Required Procedure**

This procedure identifies the process for the review of DOE and contractor press releases (and other statements to the media which might generally be called press releases) within EMCBC, to assure they properly represent DOE and EMCBC interests.

This procedure will also discuss the separate procedure for review of those press releases (and other statements to the media which might generally be called press releases) by DOE.

Discussion: Authority to issue press releases stems from the Secretary. The Secretary has designated PA-1 as the Department's sole authority for issuing press releases (and other statements to the media that may be called press releases). With some restrictions (most notably the request for advance coordination/information), this authority has been further delegated to the heads of public affairs/communications at the DOE Field Offices.

In many cases within the EMCBC, the Site Manager has delegated responsibility for overseeing/managing media activities to a Public Affairs staff member working for the EMCBC Site Office. Generally, if the subject is “local,” the Site Manager will retain decision authority. If the decision involves more than local interest (departmental policy, national programs, etc.) the EMCBC Director, in concert with the EMCBC Site Manager, and various headquarters elements (EM-3) will be consulted before a decision is reached. In no case, will there be a revision of a quote from a HQ senior program official (without advance consultation) or a change to DOE policy statements.

Informal pre-review: Technical or program staff at an EMCBC Site Office, or a contractor may informally share an early draft of a news release with HQ program counterparts for their information and comment. The EMCBC Site Public Affairs Office coordinating a release needs to be aware of such advance, informal program coordination. Comments from a program representative in such an early interaction are only part of the coordination process. Other DOE or other funding agency elements, as noted in this procedure, have a role before a release will be considered officially approved.

Although such informal coordination early in the news release development process may cause some confusion (for example, multiple drafts circulating in HQ), it can also smooth the path for later formal approval. The Field Public Affairs Representative involved should work openly and closely with the contractor and/or DOE technical staff to be fully aware of what is being shared with whom and when.

<b>Step 1</b>	<p>The EMCBC Public Affairs Office, Site Public Affairs Office, other originating organization, or contractor public affairs office drafts a proposed news release. If the originator is not a member of the Public Affairs Office, the originator sends the proposed news release to the appropriate Public Affairs Office.</p> <p>If the release is the result of an evolving emergency, refer to <a href="#">Procedure 4, Responding to Emergency Public Affairs</a>.</p>
<b>Step 2</b>	<p>The Public Affairs Office performs the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluates the release for policy sensitivity, probable extent of news media interest and program content, as well as, uses the <a href="#">EMCBC News Release Coordination Guide and Checklist</a> to determine the need for any further review.</li> <li>• Determines the need for a proposed DOE or other funding agency quote.</li> </ul>
<b>Step 3</b>	<p>The Public Affairs Office requests needed changes or a proposed quote from the originator.</p>
<b>Step 4</b>	<p>The press release can fit into one of several categories:</p>

1. EM-3 should be informed of the “news;”
    - a. The Public Affairs Office sends the release "FOR INFORMATION ONLY" via email to:
      - EM-3;
      - EMCBC Director/Deputy Director
    - b. Once EM-3 and the EMCBC Director/Deputy Director have reviewed the information, the Public Affairs Office can issue/approve the release for issuance.
  2. The EMCBC and EM-3 should review the press release;
    - a. The Public Affairs Office sends the release “For Your Review” via e-mail to:
      - EM-3;
      - EMCBC Director/Deputy Director;
    - b. The Public Affairs Office gathers all comments and passes them on to the EMCBC Director/Deputy Director for review.
    - c. The Public Affairs Office gathers comments from EM-3, the EMCBC Site Office, and others as appropriate (see the paragraph b above).
- NOTE:** A proposed release date of **no sooner than 48 hours** will permit HQ to react to any unanticipated issues with the release.
3. The EMCBC’s goals and objectives would be furthered by including a quote from a senior DOE official;
    - a. The Public Affairs Office sends the release “For Your Action – Quote requested” via e-mail to:
      - EM-3;
      - Director/Deputy Director, EMCBC;
      - Recommended the Public Affairs Office prepare a suggested quote as part of the press release.
    - b. The Public Affairs Officer and EM-3 consult on (1) whether the

	<p>press release merits a quote and then (2) the right person to be quoted and the appropriate message;</p> <p>c. The Public Affairs Officer will share the press release with the Point of Contact for the appropriate EMCBC site and others as appropriate;</p> <p>d. The Public Affairs Office gathers all comments from EM-3, the EMCBC Site Office, and others as appropriate and passes them on to the EMCBC Director/Deputy Director.</p> <p><b>NOTE:</b> A proposed release date of <b>no sooner than 48 hours</b> will permit HQ to react to any unanticipated issues with the release.</p> <p>4. The press release announces an event or activity which also requires a 72-Hour notice (see <a href="#">Memorandum from David K. Garman, Under Secretary for Energy, Science, and Environment, to the Heads of Energy, Science, and Environment Departmental Elements, titled 72-HOUR PRIOR NOTIFICATION, dated 01/20/2006</a>).</p>
<b>Step 5</b>	If the release contains Source Selection Information or other protected information (Official Use Only [OUO], etc.), the Public Affairs Office should consult with the legal advisors to determine appropriate handling (cover sheets, encrypted e-mails, password-protected e-mails, etc.).
<b>Step 6</b>	If there have been significant changes to the release, the Public Affairs Office consults with the EMCBC Site Office.
<b>Step 7</b>	The Public Affairs Office provides resulting agency comments and other release guidance to the originating organization and/or line management as needed.
<b>Step 8</b>	After the news release is issued for appropriate internal distribution, the originating office issues the news release and provides the Public Affairs Office with a copy of the final news release.
<b>Step 9</b>	The Public Affairs Office distributes the final release internally (i.e., for information purposes to those involved/interested). In addition, the Public Office will maintain the record copy of the news release.

### 3.0 References

- [DOE O 151.1C](#), *Comprehensive Emergency Management System*
- Attachment 1 - [EMCBC News Release Coordination Guide and Checklist](#)
- [Procedure 4, Responding to Emergency Public Affairs](#)

#### 4. Records Generated

Records generated through implementation of this procedure are identified as follows, and are maintained by the Office of Director in accordance with the EMCBC Organizational File Plan:

<b>Records Category Code</b>	<b>Records Title</b>	<b>Responsible Organization</b>	<b>QA Classification (Lifetime, Non-Permanent or N/A)</b>
ADM 14-42-A	News Media Materials – Non-Environmental Restoration or Remediation – News Media Case Files	Office of the Director	N/A
ENV 01-I	Public Involvement Files – Environmental Restoration or Remediation – News Media Case Files	Office of the Director	N/A